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Conf
(Evanston, 1925)

FINDINGS ADOPTED AT INTERDENOMINATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS. DECEMBER 29th THROUGH
JANUARY 1st, 1925-26.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON APPRECIATION OF THE CHURCH.

With full recognition of inconsistencies and faults within the institution, ever mindful of many perversions from the original spirit which gave it birth, we nevertheless express our appreciation of the extent to which the Christian Church has fulfilled its true mission.

The church has had a responsibility in maintaining adequate worship, the communion of man with God and of God with man. Although this is one of the essential elements in religion, there is danger in this turning into self-centered, anti-social subjectivism. For many there was a conflict between the worship element in religion and an intelligent demand for social service, but the largest opinion seemed to be that it is not a question of either or, but both and. The fullest expression of Christianity demands three beings, God and two humans. The question was raised as to whether or not the church should detach itself from western civilization. Certainly Christianity should be free from the taint and coloring of any particular civilization, but within the civilization within which it is deposited, it should have the backbone to combat existing social ills.

The church also has a responsibility in meeting the demands of the intellect. Religion is a matter of intellect as well as emotions and will. Only partially has it met this need, yet in some respects it has made a decided contribution.

1. Established and maintained colleges and universities.

2. Is rapidly improving its religious education work.

3. With partial success it has trained its paid workers.

There is still, however, intellectual bondage because of the influences of traditional beliefs. From this bondage we must free ourselves.

Although given over to the consideration of an appreciation of the church, this session showed some decidedly critical expressions.

1. Denominations are organized around ancestor worship.

2. The church was born in an atmosphere of autocracy and has fostered an arrogant nationalism.

3. Its passion for service has given over to a passion for power.

4. It has chosen corruption to crucifixion.

In conclusion, the greatest need is a critical loyalty to the church as the best channel to express our ideals. Unselfish, intelligent service, steeped in the purity of the gospel of Jesus Christ and dedicated to sacrifice is the only method of combatting the subtle and persistent dangers of institutionalism.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON THE CASE AGAINST THE CHURCH

Findings based on the
Wednesday afternoon
session. Dec.30,1925.

I. THE CHURCH AND LABOR

A. Stanley Dawley, a labor radical, held forth little hope for the solution of the laborer's problem by the application of the principles of Jesus in industry through the church. He based his pessimism upon the following grounds:

1. The church is controlled by the dominant class and reflects its interests.

2. The church is indifferent and does not know the facts concerning labor's true condition.

3. The church has no practical program to offer to solve the problem.

4. The church is a subtle moral weapon to keep the worker satisfied and servile.

5. The church is traditionally opposed to radicalism.

B. The Conference was more optimistic than the speaker, but is agreed that -

1. The Church has been saturated with the philosophy and ideals of the dominant class, and has sacrificed the social teachings of Jesus for a conscious or unconscious acceptance of our modern materialism. This situation can be improved by -

a. A greater emphasis on the vital and dynamic expression of Christianity and far less stress upon the material aspect - - - more numbers, wealth, and institutional buildings.

b. Giving ministers more freedom to preach their convictions on controversial subjects, in regards to the social application or Christianity.

c. Divorcing the ministry from the subtle pressure of capitalism.

2. The Conference is agreed that the church knows far too little concerning the facts in contemporary industrial situations. The group felt that the Church could act as a fact-finding agency in labor questions, doing work similar to that of the research of the Social Service Bulletin of the Federal Council of Churches, but on a much larger and more intensive scale.

Here there was a difference of opinion. Some maintained that fact-finding was as far as the church should go. Others felt keenly that the church should take definite and specific action in labor controversies, and wherever there is a demand for social justice.

3. The Conference is agreed that the program of the church with regard to labor problems has been weak and ineffectual. (At this session little was suggested as remedial for this condition.)

II. THE CHURCH ANDRACE

A. The following criticisms of the church from the point of view of race were raised.

1. The church has often stood for the most bigoted kind of racial discrimination.
2. Such intolerant organizations as the Ku Klux Klan, anti-Catholic groups and anti-Semitic, have been tolerated and fostered by leaders in the Christian Church.

B. The Conference vigorously apposed the Ku Klux Klan, and all like organizations, and believes that every church should do the same.

III. THE CHURCH AND THE SO-CALLED "MAN OF THE STREET".

A. Dr. Hubert Herring pointed out the following typical and often heard criticisms of the church:

1. The church is an agency for propaganda rather than a fellowship for free spiritual exploration.
2. The church is lost in institutionalism.
3. The church has lost the spirit of daring and adventure.

B. The Conference is agreed that

1. The church should limit the dogmatism of the pulpit and that at least some portion of the church services should be given to open discussion and questioning of the speaker. We should never be content with any doctrine as final truth.
2. It is the feeling of the conference that institutionalism of the church has been aggravated by denominational competition and by professional jealousy and politics among the church leaders.
3. If there is a loss of the spirit of adventure it is partially the result of our own compacency and indifference. The conference suggests that from within the church we use the experimental attack on all problems.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHRISTIANIZING AMERICA

CHRISTIANITY AND RACE

We believe that present relationships between races are inconsistent with the mind and teachings of Jesus concerning brotherhood; and we, as students now face a real problem on our own campuses in the relations of the students of the various races and creeds, Hence,

We suggest that we give ourselves to an unbiased study of the races in an effort to find a solid basis for relationships of equality and mutuality and to gain an appreciation of the distinctive contribution and capacity of each race.

That Cosmopolitan Clubs and other associations of similar purpose and scope be given all possible moral and material encouragement by the churches, the young peoples' societies, and the homes in the communities concerned.

We especially commend the work of The Inter-Racial Council at the Ohio State University and recommend that such agencies be established on every campus and in every community where there is a mixed population with the end in view of discovering the causes of racial discrimination and obtaining an attitude of mind which will promote better cooperation and understanding between the races.

We endorse the Dyer anti-lynching bill.

THE CHURCH AND INDUSTRY

We believe that the modern industrial system as now organized on a competitive basis with production for profit rather than use, is the prolific source of the major evils such as war, class distinctions and economic inequality.

We, therefore, suggest the following as typical measures by Christian students for betterment of industrial and social relations:

1. Study of local labor problems and conditions in the immediate community.

2. Participation, where possible, in the local labor activities or organizations.

3. That the Christian student exemplify in his expenditure of money a simple standard of living and view his income as a social obligation justifiable only in so far as he renders a service to society in return.

4. We commend the efforts on the part of the churches to share the responsibilities and aspirations of labor and trade unions in all instances where justice and brotherhood are the ends sought, and commend their endorsement of collective bargaining.

5. We further recommend that a conference be held specifically on the Christian student and industry.

FINDINGS ON FOREIGN MISSIONS AND THE CHURCH.--

The Conference endorses the report of the Student Commission on Foreign Missions as a statement of its principles, especially concerning the re-interpretation of the missionary program, emphasis being placed on the following:

1. Denominationalism should be absolutely cut out of the spirit and method of the Christian enterprise abroad.

2. We must strive for more mutuality of giving and receiving not only in mission work but also by means of exchange students, professors and Christian workers.
We ask the United States Congress to appropriate as much money as they now spend per year on R.O.T.C. in colleges and high schools for an exchange of sgudents between the United States and other nations.

3. Jesus' way of life must replace creedal and legalistic teachings.

4. We must separate Christian missions from political influence and Western materialism and we must stand unqualifiedly opposed to commercial explcitation.

5. The missionary must work in such a way as to eliminate the need for his leadership as quickly as possible.

6. We must seek friendship with students from other lands.

Further, the Conference makes the following additions to this statement of principles in the report:

1. The missionary enterprise should become more responsive to the courage and moral vision of youth and not be bound by the lack of vision in the churches.

2. The mission boards should be more honest with the constituency who are supporting them by explaining the policies fully though it forfeit some financial support.

3. We must seek to avoid fostering by our missions a narrow nationalism.

4. The mission boards should seek to find a way to appoint candidates to country and profession early in their educational career.

5. We must recognize a new frontier other than geographical which the evils of new social and economics exploitation have created.

We Resolve, in the light of these principles that we should undertake the task of the Christian student in working for this program as outlined in the report, as a student, as member of society, as a member of the church.
(Suggestions offered, but not added as amendments.)

1. That we substitute for the words "Missions" and "Missionaries" words which have a better connotation, e.g., American Church International Activities, Christian World Enterprise Abroad.

2. That a young person or persons be placed on the Mission Boards.

3. That the Board of Foreign Missions recognize the right of oriental Christians to administer for themselves the money raised for Christian work in their own country and to direct their own religious policies.

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CHURCH AND WAR.

1. We believe the church through its churches should excommunicate war, dissociate itself from the war system, and refuse henceforth to allow the use of the church as a medium of preparation for, or prosecution of, war.

2. Because we favor a positive education for peace, and because we believe that that present military training program of the War Department in high schools and colleges gives war an ultimate sanction, perpetuates the war system, delays disarmament, intimidates students and faculty, and inhibits free discussion, we suggest:

   a. The abolition of military training in high schools.
   b. The abolition of military training in church and denominational schools.
   c. The abolition of military training in colleges and universities, including immediate abolition of its compulsory features in land grant institutions.

3. Every local church should guard and guarantee the right of an individual to follow the guidance of his own conscience when that conscience advises against participation in war.

4. Because war is a negation of the value of human personality we condemn any attempt to impose universal conscription of manhood on the United States, such as the proposed legislation before Congress.

5. We believe the United States should take a leading share in promoting and participating in any international organization fostering good will and cooperation between nations. In particular we urge the immediate ratification of the protocol of the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague, disarmament conference, and entry into the League of Nations. We urge the churches to continue their efforts along these lines.

6. We recommend that the unanimous vote of the Conference in favor of the amendment to the report of the Findings Committee on the Church and War be sent to President Coolidge and the Senate.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

Since we conceive life to be a creative experiment in agressive good will, we recommend the educational approach to the solution of human problems facing the church, involving a careful survey of the facts, freedom of expression, consideration of all viewpoints, thorough experimentation, and as far as possible living contacts with immediate community needs.

We recommend that programs be organized in terms of Christian projects to be done instead of meetings to be held.

We recommend the introduction of courses in denominational schools and universities designed to search for a Christian solution of social problems embodying a careful survey of the facts, freedom of expression, consideration of all viewpoints, thorough experimentation, and as far as possible living contacts with immediate community needs.

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FINDINGS COMMITTEE REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION; FRIDAY EVENING, JANUARY the 1st.

We suggest that the Conference urge the church of Jesus Christ to develope according to the following suggestions:

1. That the church be based upon an entire freedom of belief.

2. That the minister may take part in movements in which his church cannot function as a church.

3. That it conceive a major purpose to educate and to inspire each man to bear his share of the social burden.

4. That it be a distinctly religious organization conserving and recreating spiritual values in man by communion with God.

5. That one united church be substituted for denominational organization.

6. That the local churches provide different types of service to minister to different religious beliefs and temperaments.

7. That as a beginning toward this unity we urge the young people's societies, immediately, to join forces regardless of denominational lines, preferably under the Federal Council of Churches.